

## Life and Death.

"What is Life, father?" "A battle, my child,  
Where the strongest lance may fail,  
Where the wariest eyes may be beguiled,  
And the stoutest heart may quail;  
Where the foes are gathered on every hand,  
And rest not, day nor night,  
And the feeble little ones must stand  
In the thickest of the night."

"What is Death, father?" "The rest, my child,  
When the strife and the toil are o'er;  
The Angel of God, who, calm and mild,  
Says we need fight no more;  
Who driveth away the demon band,  
Bids the din of battle cease;  
Takes the banner and spear from the failing hand,  
And proclaims an eternal peace."

"Let me die, father! I tremble and fear  
To yield in that terrible strife."  
"The crown must be won for heaven, dear,  
In the battle-field of Life,  
My child, tho' thy foes are strong and tired,  
He loveth the weak and small;  
The Angels of heaven are on thy side,  
And God is over all."

—The Argosy.

## New Departure.

BY DR. U. M. BEACHLY.

Read at the Brethren S. S. Convention, held at Berlin, Pa., Sep. 13th.

FRIENDS, AND FELLOW SABBATH SCHOOL WORKERS:—I would say in the out start that I do not put myself forward as one that has authority by way of experience, or superior opportunities.

I find however, to make any business or vocation a success, you must *work*. Individual, earnest, intelligent and persistent effort will win success in any worthy cause. In this convention where we have come together for the purpose of improving ourselves, by comparing notes and best methods of conducting Sunday Schools, it would be superfluous to make an argument in favor of Sunday Schools. It is now generally agreed by our best men and women, thinkers and observers, that as the twig is bent the tree is inclined.

That we need the Sunday School for the old as well as for the children and middle aged, in this age of skepticism and Sabbath desecration, it is meet and proper that we not only have our regular sanctuary services for the old veterans and disciples; but it is especially necessary that we supply wholesome, entertaining, and proper educational faculties, for the rising generation. How best to accomplish this end should and is engaging the best minds of our day. Whilst many of us may lack experiences of the best and advanced methods, we are living in an age of progress, and if we are willing to learn, and to accept the good when and wherever we find it, we need not grope in the dark or make sad and irreparable mistakes; and if we do happen to make a mistake, we will be willing, yea anxious, to retrace our steps and follow the right and adopt the best.

Christianity is a religion of love, hope and expectancy, and in the young these characteristics largely dominate. Whilst I do not think that the Sunday School should be used to teach the deep and abstruse questions of Theology, (better have that for our Universities and Theological Seminaries) yet many of the fundamental principles of the religion of Christ can be taught successfully to children, providing the teacher is qualified. The best qualification is first, that the teacher be an earnest, zealous believe in Christ himself, thoroughly imbued with the spirit and truth of Christianity, the great importance of training our children in the way they should go, how to discern evil from good, to form correct habits and principles and all of this I have no doubt the most of you know to be true. I believe that one should aim to teach that Jesus is the way, the truth and the life; and that His word is the truth, that he wants children to come and learn of Him. Teach them to be kind, obedient, patient, truthful, well behaved—in short help them to prepare for usefulness in this life, and for the mansions and glories of heaven prepared by Jesus for those that love and obey God. I have long since found out that it is easier to theorize and to preach, than to put things into practical effect. We, in our school, do about as others do. Move in ruts, go by routine, we ape. We should

and could do much better than we are doing; we have on an average about one hundred, of as interesting little and big children come to our school as you would wish to see, or could find any place under the sun, bright, clean, cheery, wide awake and intelligent. They come through rain and shine, heat or cold. Their pleasant faces and angelic voices join in singing our glorious Gospel hymns, give me a foretaste of heaven, and the wisdom and goodness of God, and should be an incentive to us for greater effort, to prepare ourselves to do our duty toward our children. When teachers' meeting comes our superintendent is there prepared to teach them. Out of a class of fourteen teachers not the half are present, why not? Too tired or some other trivial excuse must answer the purpose. On Sunday morning, these same teachers are generally late; come in after the opening services and of course continue to look, act and teach tired; in fact it makes every body tired that come in contact with them. We have been trying every means to change this. Our preacher has preached about it and prayed for these delinquents again and again. But it seems that nothing short of an earthquake would awaken these easy, self-satisfied, sleepy, tired, full of business, people to a sense of their responsibility and duty to God and their fellowmen. It is to be feared if they continue thus tired and laggard when the last trump blows, they might come late. If not entirely too tired to heed the call.

I wanted to say something, if not on modes or methods of teachings on how our Sunday schools could be made a success. At the different S. S. Conventions, I was present in the last four or five years several of these were controlled by our fraternity, and two by other Christian denominations and then I generally read the reports of all the S. S. Conventions in our county. With the exception of our own fraternity I believe the different Christian fraternities generally have, and most emphatically recommend their schools to use none but the literature of their own church, whilst this may pay, so far as their printing establishment is concerned, and gratify those that feel disposed to look only on one side of a subject, in my judgment, this is not what a broad, free and enlightened Christianity requires. It is calculated to make us move in grooves or ruts, and if too much harped and insisted on, breeds a narrow, selfish spirit—un-American, opposed to the spirit of free and untrammelled investigation. If we pray God, "To let his Kingdom come, and his will be done," to lead, guide and direct us by his spirit into all truth, and his word is the truth, and insist on teaching our own *Ipse dixit* or even *Ipso facto*, I do not believe in teaching any thing sectarian, or that partakes of bigotry. I am not censuring or criticising, but giving my own convictions of what I believe is sound Christian policy and in accord with the animus of the teachings of Christ.

I believe with Bro. Talmage, that the Christian world has but one center, *Christ our Savior*, around which, all the Christian churches, Sabbath schools and all other benevolent, charitable, and philanthropic institutions should revolve, and the closer this circle to the center and circumference moved, the more light and warmth are obtainable. Should we move on a straight line the longer and faster we move the farther away we will get from the *true center, Christ*. Being ever so honest in our convictions of right and duty, following our, or any other *name*, will lead us away; and at last wishing to get nearer the center and in so doing, we may form a circle of our own, having for its center, some great man or conglomeration of religious notions and duties good enough in their place and time but compared with the *true center*, it is as *light* compared with darkness, and in the end will lead to confusion and doubt. For these and many other reasons we want to keep as near as possible in our teaching to the center and move in its circle, so that we will be sure not to get away from the light.

Finding myself getting tedious I will drop this line of thought, and at once propose my plan. It is not new, or hazzardous either. I want our superintendent and teachers *elected* or *selected*, the same as we do our pastor and other officials, by the church congregation and Sabbath school, as the Sab-

bath school is but one end of the congregation. I will not go into detail how this electing should be done. Every church and congregation should use its own method but I want to suggest who you should elect to the office of superintendent, which office, to have and to hold the same relation to the Sunday school as does your pastor to his congregation. To visit the sick and pray with them, and give such aid and comfort to the poor and the needy, as could be rendered. To visit all the families that send children to the school, and others that do not send. To grade the school, to work and look after the interests of the school continually, study its wants, etc. This would make, where the school has one, two or three hundred scholars, all the work one person could properly attend, which would be manifest should I detail the work. This, however, our pastors, superintendents, teachers and workers understand. The superintendent must be an intelligent, patient, prudent, wide awake, Christian worker, zealous in all good work; and these we would find in every congregation amongst our Christian sisters. If there are any doubters in this convention, let them look what the sisters are and have been doing, where they have an opportunity. The Missionary societies, and in every line of Christian duty and work they succeed beyond their and our most sanguine expectations. The Sunday school work would be peculiarly suited to their Christian inclinations. What would be more appropriate than a refined, intelligent Christian women to be the pastor of a Sunday school. But just as little as you would or should expect your pastor to give his time, care and labor to the church without a proper remuneration and support should we expect the pastor of our Sabbath school to give her time, labor and care for the best interest of our school? Her responsibilities and labors would be equal to the minister's and would, I honestly believe, be worth as much to the church and cause of Christ.

The expense would be comparatively nothing to the church. The Sunday school and its friends would by its increased interest and attendance easily make up the amount needed. In many congregations we could find ladies qualified for this kind of work that would give their time in so noble a cause very cheap. Others could not afford this, but there would be no trouble to raise one-two-three or more hundred dollars in a flourishing school.

I submit this crude outline for your serious and prayerful consideration.

## Grace At Meals.

The soul that recognizes aright the source of all our blessings will adhere to the habit of giving thanks at each morning, noon, and evening meal. Many persons acknowledge the propriety of doing this, but excuse their frequent omissions on grounds wholly inadequate. Haste on account of business, or the presence of the thoughtless multitude in public restaurants or board-houses ought not to be regarded as sufficient excuse for neglect of this duty. We agree with those who would avoid unnecessary display of piety in such places of public resort. Usually the quiet and unostentatious performance of this duty carries the greatest weight of influence. Devotion, if it be genuine, will not seek for display, but will always ask for only that measure of external manifestation which will glorify God the most before the eyes of a critical and an unbelieving world.

While we admit this, we still do believe that to pause before receiving from the munificent hand of God his bounty and in the midst of a noisy multitude to silently offer the thanks that the lips may not be premitted under these circumstances to express, is always expedient and really becoming in the true Christian. Our observation has shown that whenever this has been done by a sincere heart an impression most favorable to religion has been the result. Besides, who does not know that in such obstruction of thought and heart-felt thanksgiving the inward life is always sweetly enkindled? No Christian can afford to lose this blessed sense of his heavenly Father's smile.—*Christian Advocate*.

If we practice goodness, not for the sake of its own intrinsic excellence, but for the sake of gaining some advantage by it, we may be cunning, but we are not good.—*Cicero*.

The divinest attribute in the heart of man is love, and the mightiest, because the most human principle in the heart is faith. Love is heaven; faith is that which appropriates heaven.—*F. W. Robertson*.